

**COASTAL IMPACT ASSISTANCE PROGRAM
(CIAP)
FY 2007
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1. PROJECT TITLE: St. James Parish West Bank Wetland Conservation and Protection
2. ENTITY NOMINATING THE PROJECT: St. James Parish Council
3. CONTACT INFORMATION: Mr. Jody Chenier
St. James Parish Council
P. O. Box 106
Convent, LA 70723
Ph: (225) 562-2262
jody.chenier@stjamesla.com
4. TOTAL CIAP FUNDS REQUESTED: \$718,620
5. PARISH CIAP FUNDS REQUESTED: \$718,620
6. STATE CIAP FUNDS REQUESTED: None
7. INFRASTRUCTURE FUNDS PROPOSED: None
8. DESCRIPTION AND LOCATION OF PROJECT: The St. James Parish Council would like to purchase several large tracts of existing wetlands to prohibit the destruction and aid in the protection of our Parish's coastal wetland areas. This project is proposed to purchase approximately 615 acres of existing wetlands from the Bayou Chevreuil Land Co., LLC. The areas the Parish would like to purchase and protect adjoin a major state highway that links the communities of South Vacherie in St. James Parish to Chackbay in Lafourche Parish. The purchase of these tracts will eliminate any future development from along this 1.8 mile stretch of LA Highway 20.

The purchase of these tracts will provide for the protection of 242 acres of healthy cypress swamp and 373 acres of bottomland hardwood forests in St. James Parish. It is the intention of the St. James Parish Council to create a Louisiana Conservation Servitude on the entire 615 acres. The Bayou Chevreuil Land Co., LLC is the legal owner of the proposed land to be purchased. There are no liens, encumbrances, easements, or restrictions on the property proposed under this project.

The soil survey of the site as depicted in the "Soil Survey of St. James and St. John the Baptist Parishes, La." (1973) show the soil types to be Barbary association (Ba); Barbary-Fausse association (BB); Commerce silt loam (Cm); Commerce silty clay loam (Cn); Convent complex (Cr); and Sharkey association, frequently flooded (Sm). Elevations on the site range from 0.5 to 5.0 feet above NGVD for mean sea level. The majority of the site remains saturated or inundated for most of the year.

The site is dominated primarily by facultative-wetland and obligate-wetland plant species. The dominant species include bald cypress, water tupelo, Drummond red maple, American elm, alligator weed, and water hyacinth. Some upland species grow on the spoil banks of the highway borrow canal and the Dredge Boat Canal. These include sweetgum, water oak, overcup oak, nuttall oak, willow oak, bitter pecan, and green ash.

The proposed project is located in St. James Parish, in Sections 22 and 27, Township-13-South, and Range-17-East, South Vacherie, La.

9. PROJECT TYPE: Conservation, restoration, and protection of coastal area, including wetland.
10. PROJECT JUSTIFICATION: Approximately 615 acres of cypress swamp and bottomland hardwoods will be preserved once purchased from this land owner. The property is vital to prevent commercial and residential development along this existing state highway. The conservation and protection of these wetlands would make significant progress towards sustaining a coastal ecosystem that can support and protect the environment, economy, and wetlands of southern Louisiana. The benefits from purchasing this property include hurricane protection, flood control, control of wetland impacts due to development, and protection of a critical ecological system. The program provides both near-term and long-term benefits and, at a cost of less than \$1,200 per acre, is considered highly cost effective in addressing the protection of coastal and wetland areas. This project addresses the goal of the Louisiana Coastal Area (LCA) Ecosystem Restoration Plan towards the reversing of the current trend of degradation of the coastal ecosystem and destruction of critical wetland habitats. The purchase of the property coupled with the re-establishment of natural hydraulic water flow through the removal of existing continuous spoil banks will enhance the entire site. This plan will reintroduce natural flood flows along the drainage canals that are now cut off from needed nutrients and sediments. The project not only provides multiple benefits for wetland preservation and enhancement, but also allows for flood protection by providing a large natural water reservoir and hurricane protection from wind and storm surge.
11. PROJECT COST SHARE (NON-CIAP FUNDS): The Parish will use its own equipment and labor to cut slits in the existing spoil banks. The existing spoil banks will be breached to allow water to move in and out of the swamp land areas. Natural and man-made ditches that are presently full of sediment will be dredged to restore natural drainage through the impounded swamps. It is estimated to complete the opening and creation of slits in the existing spoil banks would take approximately 60 days. The Parish cost associated with the project includes equipment, \$39,500 and labor, \$17,400. Therefore, the Parish is prepared to match the CIAP monies with in-kind contributions of \$56,900.

Parish of St. James



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Dale J. Hymel, Jr.

Parish President

March 13, 2006

Mr. Danny Moran, President
Bayou Chevreuil Land Company, LLC
2040 Steele Blvd.
Baton Rouge, LA 70808

Dear Mr. Moran:

Please accept this letter as the Parish's intent to purchase undeveloped properties from the Bayou Chevreuil Land Company, LLC. St. James Parish is part of the outer continental shelf mineral revenue appropriations, approved by Congress, called the Coastal Impact Assistance Program (CIAP). The program will be administered under the National Environmental Act, which will be overseen by the Federal Mineral Management Service. The CIAP has several funding goals, including the conservation, restoration, and protection of coastal and wetland areas.

One of the Parish's projects to be submitted is for the purchase of approximately 620 acres of wetland property from Bayou Chevreuil Land Company, LLC. It is my understanding that once the project is approved, the Parish can proceed with the purchase subject to the following restrictions.

1. Cost not to exceed \$1,115 per acre.
2. Mineral rights reserved by Bayou Chevreuil Land Company, LLC for perpetuity.
3. Property surveying and legal cost paid by the Parish.
4. Conservation easement placed on the property.
5. All existing surface usage and leases shall not exceed five years.
6. Approval of a binding buy/sell agreement by the Parish Council.
7. The Parish will purchase the property within 90 days of federal approval of this conservation and wetland protection project.

S. James Parish is excited to be able to take this step in protecting some of our valuable wetland resources. As President of St. James Parish, I appreciate your company's willingness to work with our Parish in the meaningful conservation and protection project. I hope we can continue to work together to protect the water and wetland areas of our great Parish and look forward to working with you and your company on similar projects in the future.

Sincerely,

Dale J. Hymel, Jr.
Parish President

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